

Trevor Carlson
132 North Valley Road
Naselle, WA 98638

I have personally felt the heavy oppression of Microsoft's monopoly, forced to buy Windows, unable to get a program that can perfectly interpret Word files, and unable to remove Internet Explorer; and therefore I followed with interest the Microsoft Anti-Trust case. I am disappointed with the proposed settlement however, and was glad to learn I could give suggestions.

In order to allow competition to flourish, three features must be included in the antitrust agreement. Each is meant to address the Microsoft monopoly in one area.

1. Windows must be included as an extra-cost option in all computers.

People who do not want to purchase Microsoft Windows are still forced to do so because of agreements between Microsoft and computer manufacturers. As it stands now, the perceived cost of Windows to consumers buying a computer is exactly nothing, giving an incredible burden to anyone who dares to compete with Microsoft in the area of Operating Systems. In order to restore competition in this area, computers will need to be offered without Windows.

That means that Microsoft cannot sign exclusive deals with computer manufacturers, the cost of the operating system must be visibly included with computers, and the operating system must be available at that price without having to buy a computer.

2. Windows file formats must be available for people to copy.

There are people who are forced to buy Microsoft Word, not because it is the best software for the job, but because everyone else has it. They do not want to loose business just because they cannot understand a file that was sent to them by a customer. While almost every Word replacement includes a converter to get information from Word files, they do not work all that well because Microsoft has not revealed how Word files are stored, forcing them to use guesswork to determine the format. Of course, if people have to buy Word anyway, they have no need to buy a product that does the same thing as Word. Forcing Microsoft to reveal the file format used in their products would let their products compete on merits, not on market share.

3. The third and final feature is not meant to address a current monopoly, but one that may develop in the future and must be prevented.

If Microsoft were to change networking protocols, (the language used to communicate between computers) they could force everyone on the Internet to choose a side; between Microsoft and their protocol and everybody else. This would almost certainly force everybody to bow to Microsoft in order to communicate to anybody else, allowing Microsoft to seize complete and utter control over the Internet. The solution to this is to force Microsoft to reveal networking protocols, and to keep them from changing unless approved by an independent network protocol governing body.

These three features will destroy Microsoft's grip on the computing world if implemented. Although they may seem radical, they may be the only moves that will stop Microsoft.

Trevor Carlson